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Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy
Realistic fiction	• Theme • Plot • Summarize

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Julia's New Home

by Rena Korb 
illustrated by Tim Jones



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Chapter 1

The Big Move

Julia Miller stood on the balcony of her high-rise apartment and stared gloomily at the street below. Other people might have found the scene pretty, but not Julia. She had already looked at the white tips of the Andes, the high mountains outside of Santiago, and she counted the palm trees lining the streets several times.

Julia had lived in Santiago, Chile, for just a week, and she did not like it one bit. She missed Boston, Massachusetts, where she used to live.

She remembered that terrible day when she found out they were moving! As soon as Julia came home from school, she knew something was wrong. Her father was never home that early, and her mother looked extremely serious. Then they told her the devastating news that they were moving to Santiago, Chile!

Julia's father had been offered a substantial new job in a prominent business there. "But what about *your* job?" Julia asked her mother.

"I can write books anywhere," said her mother, who was herself a noted writer of books for children. "I can't imagine anything more exciting than living in another country!"

Her father noticed Julia's trembling lips and put his arm around her comfortingly. "We would never make this move if we didn't think you'd love Chile," he told her.





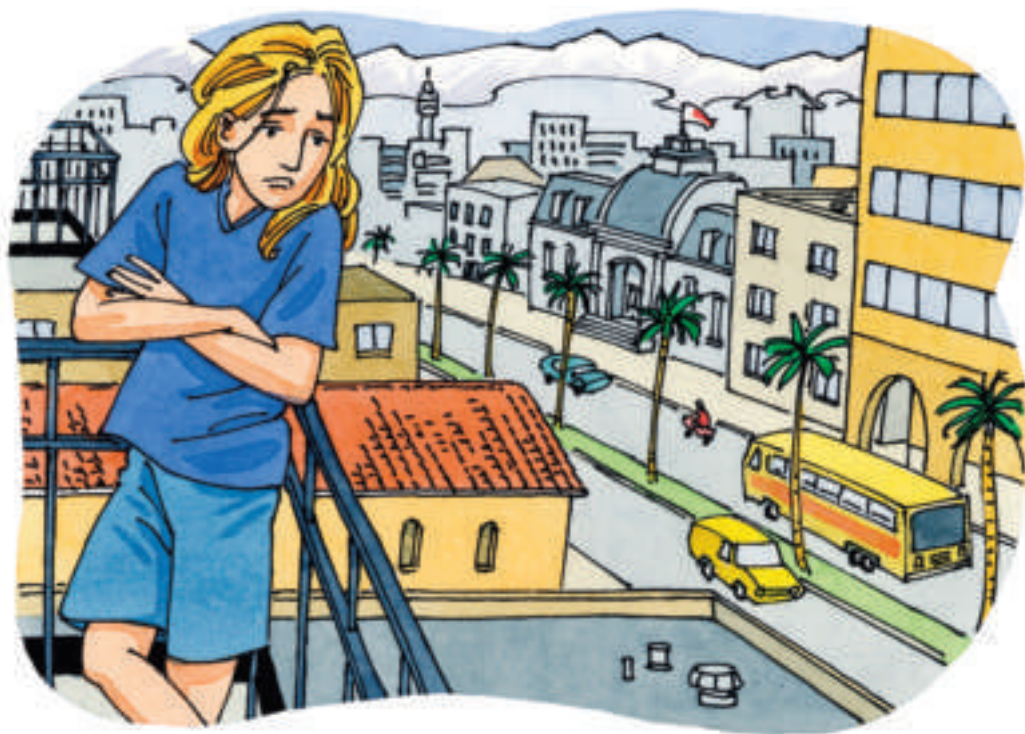
Chapter 2

A Night Out

So far, Julia didn't love Chile at all! They had arrived in January. In Chile, the school year ran from March to December, which meant she wouldn't even have the chance to meet anybody or make new friends for months!

At home it would be winter and she could ski and ice skate. Here, it was just hot—very hot.

Even her name had changed. In Spanish, there was no *J* sound. Instead, it was pronounced like an *H*. Now everyone called her "Hulia." She barely recognized it herself.



One night, Julia's dad announced he wanted to take his girls out to dinner. "Yum!" Julia said, jumping up and raring to go. She hadn't had a decent hamburger since they arrived in Chile.

"Better go change," said Julia's mother. "People don't wear shorts and t-shirts out to dinner here."

"They don't?" asked Julia. She changed into a dress, but she felt grumpy about it.

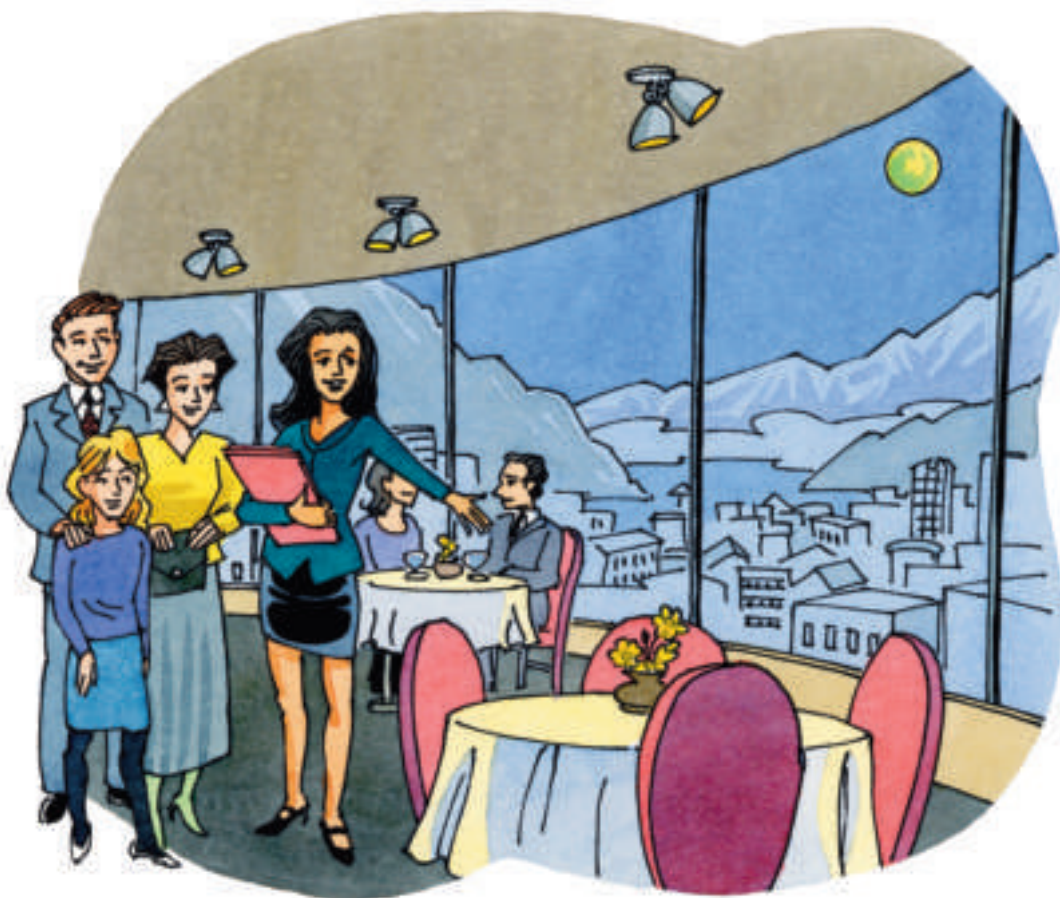
It was stiflingly hot outside, but her mother had been right. Julia noticed that no one, not even the smallest kids, was wearing shorts.

"Boy, if I have to wear long pants or dresses every time we leave the house, this is going to be a long summer!" she grumbled to herself.

They took an elevator to the top floor of a tall building. As soon as they got out, a hostess greeted them in Spanish, "*Buenas noches*." Julia did not speak Spanish, but her parents did.

"She said, 'Good evening,'" Julia's mother told her.

Julia picked up the menu. "*Well, this was a mistake*," she thought. Aloud she said, "I don't understand it!"



 Julia's parents helped her. There were so many new foods. *Humitas* were corn kernels mixed with onions and spices and then wrapped and baked in corn husks. "I bet you'd love *pastel de papas*. It's just like shepherd's pie," suggested Julia's father.

Julia's parents sampled several traditional Chilean treats. "*Es rico!*" Julia's mom exclaimed, biting into an *empanada*. "That means it's delicious. It's just ground meat, olives, and some spices—rather like a hamburger wrapped in dough."



Chapter 3

Nothing Quite the Same

The next day Julia's mom took her on a walk. The people walking by spoke a constant stream of Spanish, but Julia, of course, had no idea what they were saying.

Julia tried to explain to her mother how she felt. "It looks sort of like Boston," she said. "There are cars and stores, but nothing is quite the same—and I haven't seen a single hamburger place yet!"



"Why don't we get a snack?" her mom suggested. They stopped at a café, where Julia's mom got a soft drink, and Julia picked out a cookie. "You want to pay?" Julia's mom said, handing her a bill.

Julia stared at the money in her hand. Along the bottom she read "*Cinco mil pesos*" and in the corner it said 5,000. She was holding 5,000 pesos. "So much money!" she exclaimed.

"Not really," Julia's mother laughed. "Five thousand pesos is only a bit more than eight dollars." Julia's mother sighed. "There is one thing I don't like about Chile. They often don't have the kind of coffee I like."

Julia realized that, like herself, her mom missed some things about life back home. Knowing that made her feel a little less alone.



After their snack, they stopped to watch some kids playing soccer. One boy was playing by himself, kicking the ball and bouncing it off his knee. Then he bounced it off his head! "He's really a great player," Julia said.

The boy saw her watching. "*¿Le gusta el fútbol?*" he asked with a smile. When Julia did not answer, the boy repeated his question. This time Julia made out the word *football*. However, all she could say was "*No hablo español*," which meant "I don't speak Spanish." How could she be expected to make friends if she couldn't speak the language?





Julia's mother worked at her computer the next day, typing up notes for a new children's book she was going to write. Julia turned on the television to fill up the silent apartment. She immediately spotted one of her favorite television programs, but the actors and actresses had been dubbed and spoke in Spanish!

Julia turned to a show she remembered seeing and found she could figure out some of the words. To her surprise, she even understood a bit of what they were saying.

All that afternoon, Julia watched Spanish shows. She especially loved variety shows. On a whim, she started writing down some Spanish words. Then she found she was adding to her list. Could it be she was learning Spanish by watching TV? Imagine that!



(For Julia's list of Spanish words and phrases, see page 22.)



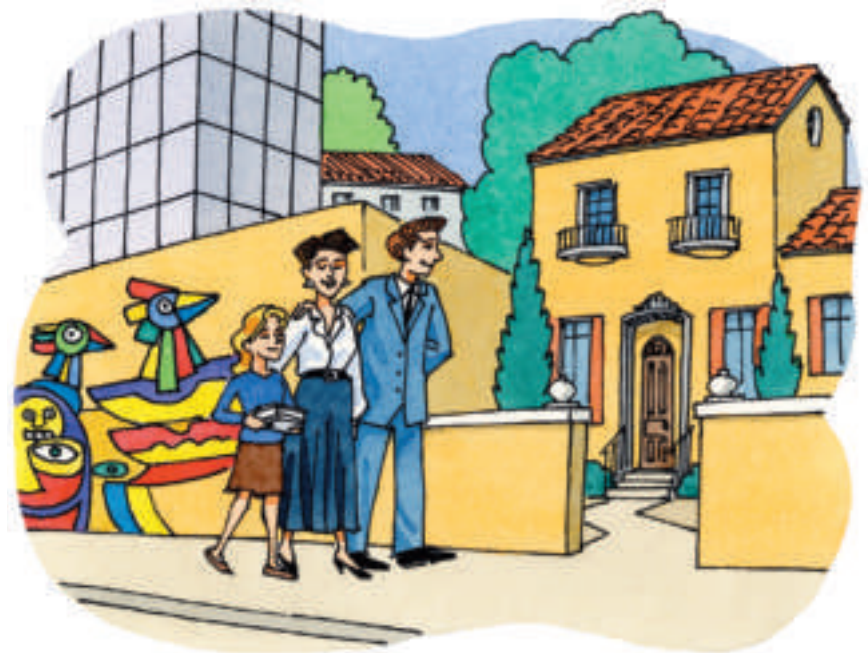
Chapter 4

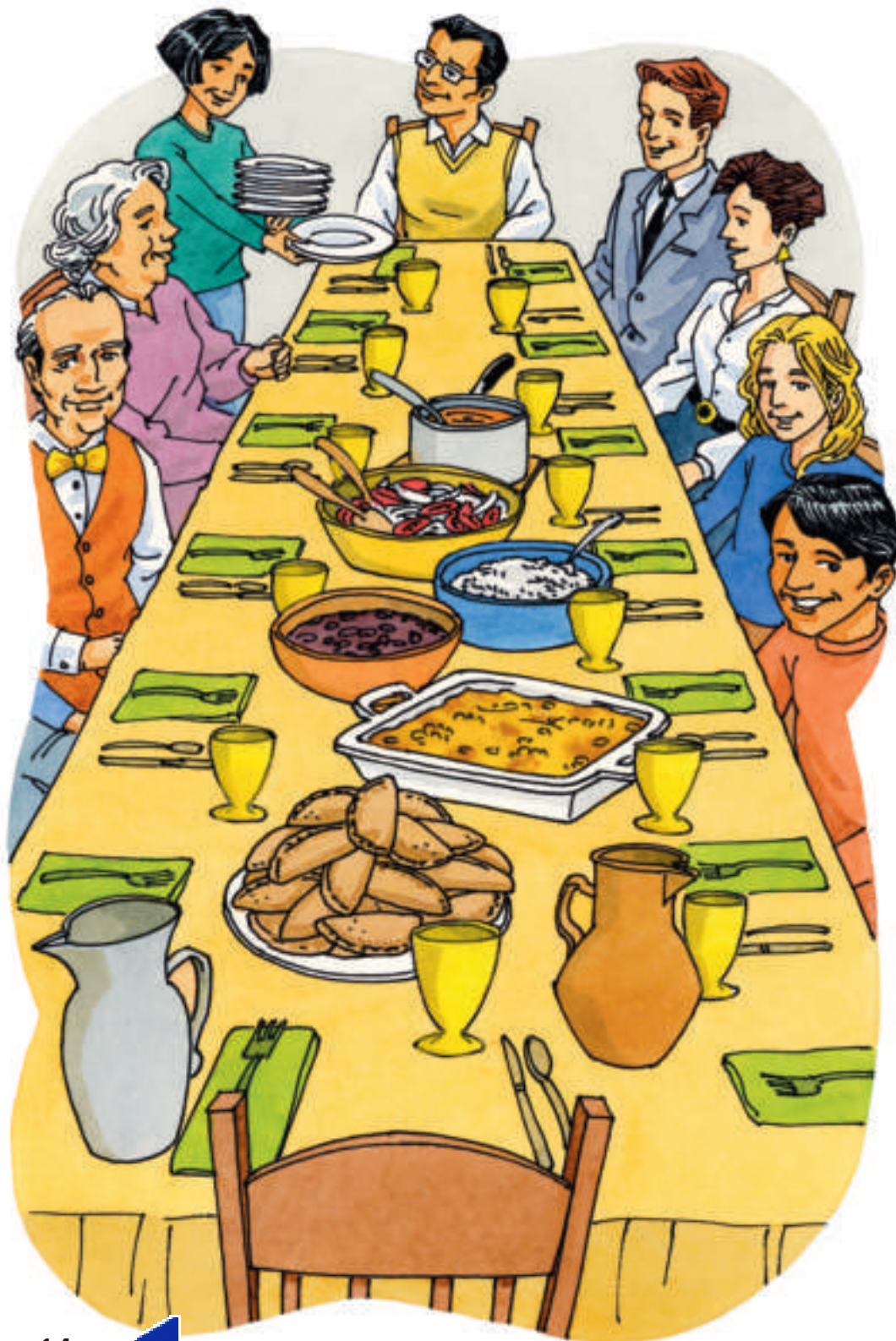
A Big Chilean Family

One day, Julia and her family were invited to dinner at the house of her father's boss. His name was Eduardo Ruiz García.

Julia's mother laid out a skirt for her. "I hate wearing a skirt," Julia muttered, but she put it on without a fight. She even made sure her fingernails were clean without being told.

After a short drive, the Millers pulled up in front of a quaint, old home, covered with stucco and inset with colorful tiles. Julia followed her parents to the door, holding a box of candy to give to their hosts. Julia's mother murmured, "Don't be surprised if Daddy's boss has a big family. Many generations in Chile often live under the same roof."





Julia's mother was right! Julia met her hostess, Señora Rojas, and the señora's mother, Doña Eva. She also met an uncle, a married son and his wife, and three teenage children.

Then she met her father's boss. "I am Señor Ruiz," he said.

"But I thought your last name was Ruiz García!" Julia exclaimed. "What happened to the rest of your last name?"

Everyone in the room laughed. For a moment, Julia felt embarrassed. "Most people in Chile have two last names," he said. "One from their mother and one from their father. People usually use only their father's name in day-to-day life."

The dinner table was covered with traditional Chilean treats. There was a salad of chopped onions and tomatoes, a meat casserole called *pastel de choclo*, and a special pumpkin stew. Julia recognized a plate piled high with empanadas.

Remembering how her mother had enjoyed them at the restaurant, Julia took a small, tentative bite. Her mother was right! They were delicious. She wrinkled her forehead, trying to think what her mother had said. "*Es rico!*" she told the table. The whole family responded with smiles and nods.





Chapter 5

Exploring the City

Over the next month, Julia and her mother continued to explore the city. One day they found a crafts fair, where women dressed in colorful costumes sold silver jewelry and many lovely hand-crafted household items. There were also traditional crafts made by the Mapuche Indians. After looking carefully, they chose a silver headband for Julia.

Other days they took the subway to the center of Santiago to visit the city's many museums. Julia particularly liked the history museum.

Julia loved walking around the city. She always saw something new. There were the modern video arcades called flippers, and Julia loved the post office that was in an old colonial palace.

Another day, when they were walking, they recognized Señor Ruiz's wife, Señora Rojas!

"*Son los Millers!*" Señora Rojas called out with a wave. Julia's mother stopped, and the two women talked for a few minutes in Spanish. To Julia's surprise, she realized she could make out a word here and there.



One weekend, Julia's dad came with them to the rodeo, which was called *la fiesta huaso*. "You two are having so much fun exploring, I want to explore too!" he said.

Julia loved the exciting rodeo. She thought that huasos looked a little bit like American cowboys. Instead of big tan cowboy hats, though, the huasos wore flat-brimmed hats made of felt. Instead of cowboy shirts, they wore colorful *mantas*, which were like ponchos, only shorter.

"I think there's a secret to living here," Julia told her parents. "Santiago is like Boston. But different!" Her parents laughed.





The rodeo was so thrilling. Julia watched with excitement as teams of riders chased a bull around the ring. They used their horses to nudge the bull to a stop along the railing. If they hit that spot, they'd get more points.

After the teams competed and the judges awarded trophies, the huasos took turns dancing with the queen of the rodeo.

"That was fun, wasn't it?" Julia mumbled sleepily on the ride home.



Chapter 6

A New School Year

It was finally time! School would start in two more weeks, and Julia was both excited and nervous.

She looked at the school supplies she and her mother had bought. There were shiny new pens and smooth notebooks. "I hope these are good choices," Julia said. "I want to fit in—you know, like everyone else."

"Well, at least you'll *look* like everyone else," her mom said. "Remember that school uniform!"

Julia groaned aloud. At her school, everyone had to wear a uniform. Her uniform was a boring gray skirt, white blouse, and red necktie.





Later that day, they went for a walk. Outside Señora Rojas's house stood Doña Eva, accompanied by a girl who looked just about Julia's age. "*Buenos días!*" Señora Rojas called out eagerly. She greeted Julia's mother by kissing her on both cheeks and smiled warmly at Julia.

Then she introduced the girl "*Ésta es mi sobrina. Se llama Isabel.*"

"She's Doña Eva's niece," her mother explained to Julia.

"*Buenos días, Isabel,*" Julia said. "*Me llamo Julia.*" That was another sentence she had learned. It means, "Hello, Isabel. My name is Julia."



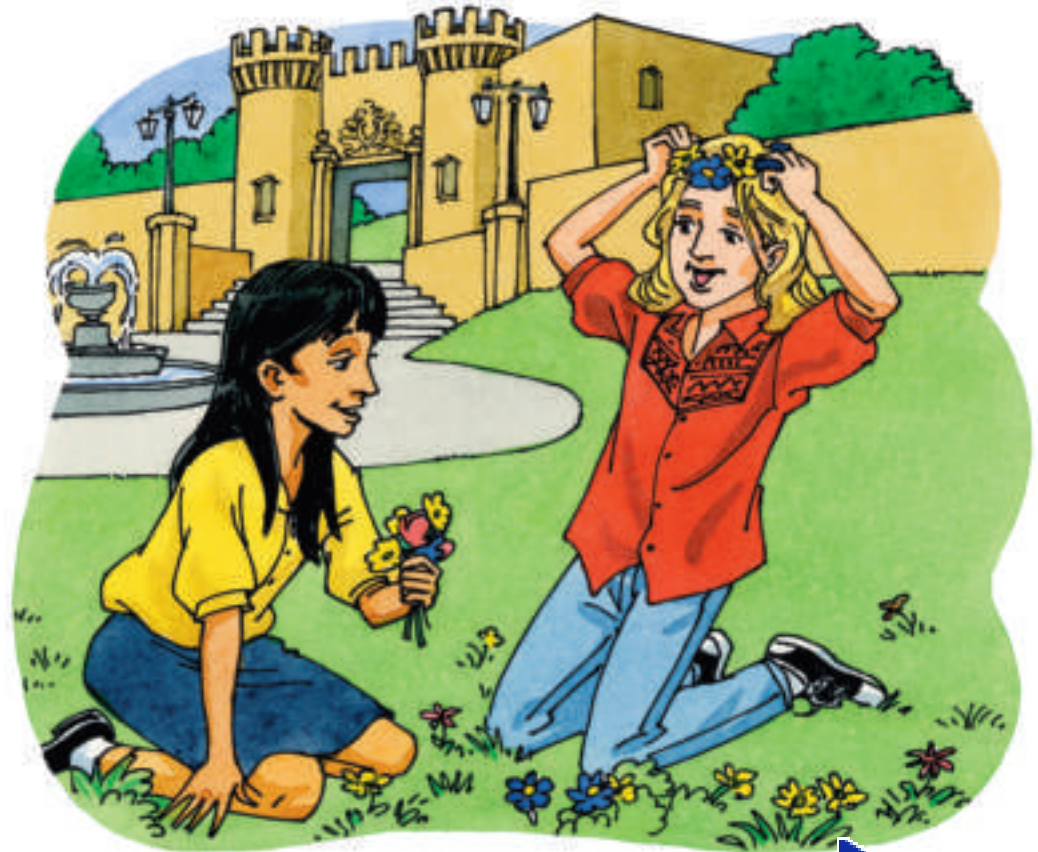
"*Me gusta tu camisa,*" Isabel said.

Julia looked down at her brand-new bright red shirt. "*Muchas gracias,*" she answered. Only then did she realize that something amazing had just happened. She had understood Spanish!

Julia and Isabel spent the rest of the afternoon together. Julia could not understand everything Isabel said, but the girls also used gestures.

At the end of the day, Julia was sad to leave. That's when Mrs. Miller told her the news. "You girls are going to the same school." Then she translated so Isabel could understand.

"Cool!" the new friends exclaimed at exactly the same time.





Julia's Spanish List

banco nacional	national bank
buenas noches	good evening
buenos días	good day
churros	fritters
cinco mil	five thousand
empanada	ground meat wrapped in dough
<i>Es rico.</i>	<i>It's delicious.</i>
<i>Ésta es mi sobrina.</i>	<i>This is my niece.</i>
hoy	today
huasos	cowboys
humitas	corn baked in corn husks
la fiesta huaso	rodeo
Le gusta el fútbol.	<i>She/he likes soccer.</i>
mantas	short capes, like ponchos
Me gusta tu camisa.	<i>I like your shirt.</i>
Muchas gracias.	<i>Thank you very much.</i>
No hablo español.	<i>I don't speak Spanish.</i>
pastel de choclo	meat casserole
pastel de papas	shepherd's pie
pescado fresco	fresh fish
peso	unit of money, like the American dollar
Se llama Isabel.	<i>Her name is Isabel.</i>
Son los Millers.	<i>It's the Miller family.</i>
tarjetas de crédito	credit cards



The City of Santiago

In 1541 a Spanish explorer named Pedro de Valdivia built a new city along the Mapocho River. He named the settlement Santiago. The surrounding land was called Chile. For nearly 300 years, the land was ruled by Spanish governors.

By the early 1800s, the people of Chile wanted to be free from Spain. Between 1810 and 1818, Chileans fought the War of Independence. After the victory, Santiago became the new capital of the country of Chile.

Today, Santiago is a modern, exciting city with a population of more than six million. Santiago has a subway system, several airports, many banks and businesses, and a stock exchange.

The city also is rich in culture. Chileans and tourists alike enjoy visiting the city's museums, sightseeing among the old Spanish buildings, or simply relaxing in the beautiful parks.





Reader Response

1. On page 17, Julia realizes that she has figured out the secret to living in Santiago. What is the secret?
2. Summarize the adventures that Julia and her mother have in Santiago.
3. On page 7, Julia *grumbled*. Skim the book and list as many substitutes for *said* as you can find—such as *announced* and *exclaimed*. What does each of these words suggest about the speaker's state of mind?
4. Give one or more examples of a way that Julia finds life the same in Santiago as it is back home in Boston. Give one or more examples of a way that she finds life different. Use a chart like this one to organize your responses.

